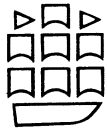
Stories from Shakespeare

Stories from Shakespeare

Simplified by Brian Heaton *and* Michael West

Illustrated by Whitear



Longman

1200 word vocabulary

LONGMAN GROUP LIMITED
Longman House, Burnt Mill,
Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE, England
and Associated Companies throughout the world.

© J. B. Heaton and M. West 1966

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Copyright owner.

First published 1966
New edition 1977
Ninth impression 1983
ISBN 0 582 53529 8

Cover illustration by Carol Tarrant

Contents

The Merchant of Venice	*page*	1
A Midsummer Night's Dream		16
Hamlet		30
The Tempest		45
Julius Caesar		56
Questions		71
Names in the stories		76

Words outside the vocabulary for Stage 3 which are not explained in the text are shown by a star* and are listed at the end of the book

'Shylock must be merciful,' said Portia

The Merchant of Venice

Antonio and Bassanio

A merchant called Antonio lived in Venice. Everyone in Venice liked Antonio because he was a good man. He was always ready to help anyone who came to him. Antonio had many ships which traded with other countries. At the time of our story, his ships were all at sea.

The friend whom Antonio loved the most was called Bassanio. When Bassanio's father died, he gave his son a lot of money. But Bassanio soon spent it all; he became poor and very unhappy.

One day Bassanio told Antonio that he was in love with Portia, a rich and beautiful lady who lived at Belmont, near Venice. Portia's father gave her all his money on his death, so she was very rich. Bassanio was sad because he could never ask Portia to marry him while he himself had no money. He knew that many rich young men were going to Belmont to try to marry Portia. So he asked Antonio to lend* him three thousand ducats (the money of Venice at that time).

'Please lend me the money. I will pay it back to you later,' he said. 'If I had enough money, I would go to Belmont and ask the beautiful Portia to marry me.'

'I haven't any money just now,' Antonio replied. 'All my money and goods are at sea. I am waiting for my ships to return. Find someone who knows me and will lend money to me. Then I will get the money and lend it to you so that you can go to Belmont and marry Portia.'

Shylock

Bassanio went to a man who lent money. The money-lender's name was Shylock. Shylock had a lot of money, but he loved it too much. He used to lend his money to merchants and then make them pay back much more than they had borrowed*. Therefore the merchants of Venice did not like Shylock. Antonio used to warn other merchants about Shylock.

Shylock had never liked Antonio.

'Antonio is kind and will lend his money to anyone,' he said. 'He never makes people pay him back more than they borrowed. He makes things difficult for me.'

Shylock was a dangerous man. He would not let anyone see that he was an enemy of Antonio. When Bassanio asked Shylock to lend him three thousand ducats for three months, Shylock knew that Antonio would soon be in his power!

'I shall never forgive Antonio,' he said to himself. 'I shall not be happy till I have caught him.'

Shylock remembered the times when Antonio had said unpleasant things to him.

'You do not like the way I make my money,' Shylock told Antonio when they met. 'You have called me a dog and treated me like a dog. Now you come to me to ask for money. Does a dog have money? Can a dog lend a person three thousand ducats? Shall I bow to you and thank you for treating me like a dog? And shall I lend you money?'

But Antonio was not afraid.

'If you lend me money,' he replied, 'don't lend it to me as you would lend it to a friend. Lend it to me as you would lend it to an enemy. If I can't pay you back, you can make me suffer for it.'

'I want to be your friend,' said Shylock. 'I shall forget

what has happened in the past and lend you the money.' Then he pretended to laugh. 'Let us play a game: if you do not pay back the money at the end of three months,' he said, 'you must promise to give me a pound of your flesh*; you must allow me to cut the flesh from any part of your body.'

Antonio laughed too and agreed to this: he did not think that Shylock really meant what he said. But Bassanio was afraid. He said, 'I think Shylock will do what he says. I don't want you to get money from Shylock.'

'Don't be afraid,' said Antonio. 'In two months my ships will return and bring me plenty of money.'

So Antonio borrowed the money from Shylock and gave it to Bassanio.

The three boxes

Before he died, Portia's father thought of a way to find a good husband for his daughter. He thought, 'I am afraid that many young men will want to marry Portia because she is rich. So I shall leave three small boxes—one box made of gold, another made of silver, and the third made of lead. The man who wants to marry Portia must choose* the right box.'

Portia and her servant Nerissa were talking about all the young men who had come to try to win Portia. A servant came into the room.

'A prince has come from Africa,' he said.

Portia showed the prince all the boxes, and the prince carefully read everything that was written on each box.

On the gold box were the words: 'The man who chooses me shall get what many men wish for.'

On the silver box were the words: 'The man who chooses me shall get as much as he ought to get.'

And on the lead box were the words: 'The man who chooses me must give, and must be ready to lose everything he has.'

'My picture is inside the right box,' said Portia. 'Choose!'

The prince studied the words on all three boxes: he said, 'All the world wishes for gold: all the world wishes for Portia, so I choose the gold box.'

The prince took the key from Portia and opened the box. But he was surprised when all he saw inside was the head of a dead man and a piece of paper. On the paper was written: 'All that shines brightly is not gold.'

The prince left with a sad heart and Portia was pleased to see him go.

Bassanio visits Portia

Then a French prince came. He was very proud, so he chose the silver box: 'The man who chooses me shall get as much as he ought to get.' The proud prince said, 'I am a great man: so I ought to get all that I wish for.' He opened the box; in it he found a picture of a fool's head. There was also a piece of paper in the box. It said, 'There are many fools covered in silver.' The prince said, 'I have been a fool!' and he went away.

A servant came to Portia and said, 'A young man from Venice is coming to try to win you.' This young man was, of course, Bassanio.

There were many servants with Bassanio when he reached Portia's house in Belmont. There was also a man called Gratiano. Gratiano was both a servant and a friend to Bassanio.

Portia had fallen in love with Bassanio. She said, 'Please wait a day or two before you begin to choose; if you choose the wrong box, I shall see no more of you. I

would like to keep you here a month or two before you choose. I could teach you how to choose the right box; but I have promised not to do that.'

Bassanio said, 'No. Let me choose now. I can't bear to wait.'

Bassanio chooses

Bassanio looked at the gold and silver boxes. He thought, 'Those things which seem beautiful from the outside are not always beautiful inside. The lead box does not promise to give me anything. It tells me that I should be ready to give all that I have to the woman whom I love. So I choose this.'

He opened the lead box, and in it he saw Portia's picture. Then he read the paper which was in the box: 'If you are pleased with this, turn to your lady and kiss her.'

Bassanio turned to Portia and said, 'Dear lady, will you be mine?'

'I wish,' answered Portia, 'that I were a thousand times more beautiful and ten thousand times richer; then I might be good enough for you. I give you myself, and all that is mine.'

She took a ring off her finger and gave it to him.

'Take this ring,' she said. 'When you lose it, or give it away, that will be the end of our love.'

'When this ring leaves my hand,' answered Bassanio, 'then life will have left me. I shall be dead.'

As Portia and Bassanio stood talking about their love for each other, Gratiano and Nerissa came up to them. Nerissa said, 'We wish you joy in your marriage. Gratiano and I are to be married, too.'

A letter from Antonio

Just as the four happy people were arranging to be married, three friends arrived from Venice with a letter from Antonio. Bassanio opened the letter and began to read it.

Portia looked at Bassanio's face. She was sure that something very bad had happened. She said, 'I am half of you, and I must have half of anything which troubles you. Tell me what it is.'

'Here are a few of the most unpleasant words that were ever written,' said Bassanio. Then he told her about Antonio's promise to Shylock.

'How much must Antonio pay to Shylock?'

'Three thousand ducats.'

'Only three thousand,' said Portia. 'I have far more money than that. Pay him six—or nine. Read his letter to me.'

Bassanio read the letter:

'Dear Bassanio, My ships are all lost. Now I have no money, so I cannot pay Shylock. I must give him a pound of my flesh. If I do that, it will certainly be the end of my life. Therefore please forget about the money that you borrowed from me. All I wish now is to see you before I die.'

The kind Portia told Bassanio to go at once to his friend. But she wanted Bassanio to marry her before he went. Then he would be able to take her money and pay Shylock. So as soon as they were married, Bassanio hurried off to Venice to see his dear friend, Antonio.

When Bassanio and Gratiano had gone, Portia thought of a way to save Antonio. She decided to go to Venice herself.

Portia had a good friend who was a famous judge. She asked him to lend her all his judge's clothes and notes.

Then she put on the clothes and pretended to be a judge. Her maid, Nerissa, was dressed like a judge's manservant.

'I shall act like a very young man,' Portia said to Nerissa. 'I shall speak in a voice between a man's and a boy's, and I shall try to walk like a man.'

Then Portia and Nerissa set out for Venice.

Antonio in danger

Shylock was very angry with Antonio. One of Antonio's friends had run away with Shylock's beautiful daughter. They were in love with each other and they had run away to get married. They had also taken some of Shylock's money and jewels.

Shylock was so angry that he ran through the streets of Venice. He shouted to everyone about his daughter and the money that she had taken. All the little boys in Venice followed him and laughed at him.

'His jewels, his daughter, and his money,' they shouted.

When the angry Shylock heard that Antonio's ships were lost at sea, he was very pleased. He knew that now he could kill Antonio.

Antonio asked Shylock to give him another chance to pay. But Shylock would not listen to him.

'Guard him well,' Shylock said to the man who was taking Antonio to prison. 'Don't ask me to forgive him. Don't talk to me about mercy* and forgiveness. I won't have mercy: I'll take my pound of flesh from him.'

One of Antonio's friends said, 'Perhaps the Duke of Venice can stop Shylock.'

But Antonio did not want the Duke to change the law. He said, 'Strangers won't trust Venice if we change the law for one person. That would be very dangerous because Venice is a great centre for trade.'

The brave Antonio did not again ask Shylock for mercy, for he knew that Shylock meant to kill him. All Antonio wished for now was to see his friend Bassanio once more.

The court

Antonio was taken to court, and the trial began. The Duke of Venice said to Shylock, 'Have mercy on Antonio. Everyone thinks that you will pretend to be bad until the last minute. Then you will show your mercy.'

'I have promised to take my pound of flesh,' Shylock answered. 'If you do not let me have it, that will be bad for Venice. No one will trust your laws. The greatness of Venice will soon be lost. Antonio is my enemy: I hate him.'

Bassanio said, 'Do all men kill those things that they hate?'

'It is useless trying to talk to Shylock,' said Antonio. 'Don't wait any longer. Pass judgment on me and give Shylock what he wants.'

'I'll pay you six thousand ducats in return for the three thousand ducats that Antonio borrowed,' said Bassanio.

'If you offered me six times the amount that you have just offered,' said Shylock, 'I would still take my pound of flesh. Give me my pound of flesh!'

'How can you hope for mercy yourself when you show none?' asked the Duke.

'I have done nothing wrong and I fear no judgment,' Shylock replied. 'Give me my pound of flesh!'

Portia in court

As the Duke was wondering what to do, a servant arrived with a letter. The letter was from the famous

judge whom Portia had visited. The servant was really Nerissa, dressed like a young man.

While the Duke was talking to Nerissa, Shylock began to get ready to cut his pound of flesh from Antonio.

Then the letter was read out for all the court to hear:

'I am very ill. When your letter reached me, I had with me a learned young man from Rome. His name is Balthazar. I told him about the quarrel between Shylock and Antonio. We studied many law-books and he knows what I would say. I ask you to let him stand in my place and give judgment. He is young, but I never knew so young a body with so wise a head.'

After this letter had been read to the court, Portia entered the large room, dressed like a judge. She appeared so fine in her judge's clothes that Bassanio did not know that it was Portia.

She took her seat as judge.

'Are you Antonio?—And is this your agreement with Shylock?'

'It is.'

'Then,' said Portia, 'Shylock must be merciful: he must have mercy on Antonio.'

'Why must I have mercy on him?' said Shylock. 'Tell me that!'

Portia answered:

'Mercy falls like the gentle rain from the sky upon the earth. It blesses him who gives it, and him who receives it. Kings have mercy in their hearts. And God has mercy: he has mercy upon us. We all pray to God for mercy: so we should learn to show mercy to others. Do you still ask for this pound of flesh?'

'I ask for what is mine by law!' answered Shylock.

Bassanio said, 'I offer ten times the amount of money that Antonio has borrowed. Please change the law a little so that we may save Antonio.'

'We cannot change a law,' answered Portia. 'If one law is changed, then other men will later want to change other laws.'

'Oh, wise young judge!' cried Shylock.

Portia said, 'Let me see this agreement, this promise of Antonio to you.'

'Here it is!' answered Shylock, giving her the paper.

'Yes,' she said. 'By law Shylock may have a pound of flesh to be cut off by him nearest to Antonio's heart. Be merciful! Let me destroy this paper.—No? Then, Antonio, be ready; and Shylock, take your knife.'

'Oh learned judge! Oh wise young man!' cried Shylock.

'Have you brought anything to weigh the flesh?' Portia asked Shylock.

'Yes,' answered Shylock. 'I have everything ready here.'

'Have you a doctor, Shylock, to stop Antonio's blood?' Portia asked.

'That was not in our promise,' Shylock said.

'Do you wish to say anything?' Portia asked Antonio.

'Only a little,' replied the brave Antonio. 'Goodbye, Bassanio. Don't be sad for me. Tell your wife about me and how much I loved you. If Shylock cuts deep enough, I'll pay him back with all my heart.'

'I love you more than my own life, more than my wife, and more than all the world,' cried Bassanio. 'I would gladly lose everything in order to save you.'

'Your wife wouldn't like that offer if she were

present,' said Portia.

Then Gratiano, who liked to do everything that Bassanio did, spoke about his own wife.

'I have a wife, whom I love very much,' he said. 'But I wish that she were dead and in heaven. Then she would be able to ask God to help Antonio.'

Nerissa laughed quietly when she heard her husband.

'It is good that you make this wish when she is not here,' she said to Gratiano. 'If she were present, there would be trouble at your home.'

Not one drop of blood

'We are wasting time,' said Shylock.

'Take your pound of flesh,' said Portia. 'The law allows it and the court gives it to you.'

As Shylock began to move towards Antonio, Portia spoke again.

'Wait!' she said. 'There is something else. Antonio has promised to give you a pound of his flesh. But he has not promised to give you any of his blood. If you let one drop of his blood fall, you will lose all your land and all your money.'

'Oh, learned judge! Oh wise young man!' cried Gratiano.

'Is that the law?' asked Shylock.

'You shall see the law,' replied Portia. 'You wanted judgment; so you shall get judgment—more than you wanted.'

'I will take the money,' said Shylock. 'Give me three times more than Antonio borrowed from me.'

'Here it is,' Bassanio cried out, full of joy.

But Portia stopped him. 'Wait!' she said. 'Shylock would not take the money earlier. All he wanted was his pound of flesh. That is all he can have now: no more, no

less, just one pound—and not one drop of blood.'

Shylock turned to leave the court.

'Beg for mercy'

Portia had still not finished with Shylock.

'Wait, Shylock,' she said. 'The law of Venice says that if anyone tries to kill one of the people of Venice, everything that he owns shall be taken away from him. One half of his money and goods shall be given to the city of Venice and the other half shall be given to the person he has tried to kill. Your life is now at the mercy of the Duke, so fall on your knees and beg for mercy.'

'I shall not kill you,' the great Duke said. 'But half of your money is now Antonio's. You must give the other half to the city of Venice.'

'Take my life too!' cried Shylock. 'My money and goods are as dear to me as life itself.' When you take those away from me, you take also my life.'

'I shall be happy to give up my part of Shylock's money,' said Antonio. 'Shylock must promise to leave the money on his death to his daughter and her husband.'

Shylock promised.

'Let me go home,' he said. 'I am not well.'

Then the Duke set Antonio free. He thanked Portia for everything she had done and he asked her to go to his house to have dinner with him. But Portia replied that she must quickly return to her own home.

The rings

Antonio and Bassanio were left alone with Portia: they were full of thanks to her. 'I ask you to take the three thousand ducats that Shylock has given to us,' said

Bassanio. But Portia would take nothing at all.

'Dear sir,' said Bassanio. 'Please take something so that you may remember us. We know that you do not want us to pay you; but we wish to give you something in order to show our thanks to you.'

Portia pretended suddenly to notice a beautiful ring on Bassanio's finger. It was the ring that she had given to Bassanio in Belmont.

'Give me your ring,' she said. 'I shall wear it so that I can always remember you.'

Bassanio had promised to wear the ring for ever.

'This ring,' he said, 'is too poor a present to give to you.'

'I'll take nothing else,' said Portia.

'I'll give you the best ring in Venice,' said Bassanio. 'But I can't give you this ring. My wife gave it to me. She made me promise never to sell it, nor to give it away, nor to lose it.'

'If your wife knew what I had done for you, she wouldn't want you to keep the ring,' said Portia, as she walked away angrily.

'Let the judge have the ring,' said Antonio. 'He should have much more than a ring after all he has done for us.'

Bassanio thought again about the ring. He felt that he must show his deep thanks to the young judge and he knew that Antonio was right. At last he changed his mind and gave the ring to his servant Gratiano. He sent Gratiano after Portia with the ring.

When Gratiano brought the ring to Portia, he met Nerissa again. The two ladies were still dressed like men, so he did not know who they really were.

Nerissa had also given Gratiano a ring in Belmont. She said quietly to Portia, 'I'll see if I can get my husband's ring that he too promised to keep for ever!'

Gratiano and Nerissa

Portia and Nerissa returned to Belmont. As they came near the house, Portia saw the little lamp burning in the hall.

'How far that little lamp throws its light!' she said. 'It is like one good act in a dark world.'

As soon as Bassanio arrived, he took Antonio to Portia and told her about everything that had happened. While the three of them were talking, Nerissa and Gratiano began to quarrel.

'A quarrel already?' asked Portia. 'What's the matter?'

'It's only about a poor little ring that Nerissa gave me,' replied Gratiano.

Gratiano tried to laugh about it, but Nerissa pretended to be very unhappy.

'You promised me that you would wear it until you died,' cried Nerissa.

'I gave it to a young man,' Gratiano said. 'He was only a boy, no taller than you. He was the servant of the wise judge and he asked me for it.'

Portia was enjoying this; but she did not laugh! She said solemnly, 'It was wrong of you to give away your ring, Gratiano. You promised to wear it for ever. I also gave my husband a ring. He would never give it away for all the money in the world.'

The happy ending

Gratiano said, 'Bassanio gave his ring away, too. He gave his ring to the wise young judge; and then the boy, the judge's servant, wanted mine.'

Portia turned to Bassanio. 'You have broken your promise to me!' she said. 'I shall never love you until I see the ring again.'

'I gave the ring to a judge who wouldn't take the three thousand ducats I offered him. He had just saved the life of my dearest friend. What else could I do?'

'I pray you to forgive him,' said Antonio. 'I once lent my body so that Bassanio could come to marry you. I should be dead now if the young judge had not saved me. I promise you, upon my life, that Bassanio will always be a good husband to you.'

'Then,' replied Portia, 'give him this ring and tell him to keep it better than the other.'

'It's the same ring that I gave to the wise young judge!' cried Bassanio.

'And I was that young judge,' said Portia. 'And here is my servant, that little boy! Nerissa was my servant!'

Bassanio could hardly believe that it was Portia who had judged the case so well.

But that was not all. Portia gave Antonio a letter. The letter told Antonio that three of his ships had just returned safely to Venice.

'Come,' said Portia. 'It is almost morning, and I am sure that we all have many more questions to ask and answer. Let us go in and we will answer all things fully.'

'Let it be so,' said Gratiano. 'Come, young servant of the wise judge—or would you rather be my wife?'

A Midsummer Night's Dream

'Marry Demetrius, or—'

There was once in Greece a law which made young women very unhappy. This law said that a father could choose any man and make his daughter marry him. Sometimes a father did not care whether or not his daughter liked the man whom he chose.

One day an old man brought his beautiful daughter Hermia to the Duke of Athens. Athens was the biggest city in Greece, and the Duke was a very powerful man. Everyone in Athens obeyed the Duke.

'I have come to tell you about my daughter Hermia,' said the old man. Then he turned and pointed to two young men who had come with Hermia. One of the young men was called Demetrius and the other was called Lysander. 'I have ordered Hermia to marry Demetrius, but she won't do it. She loves Lysander, and she wants to marry him. Please tell her about the old law of Athens: it says that she must marry the man whom I choose.'

'Your father should be like a god to you,' said the Duke. 'And you should do as your father wishes. Demetrius is a good man.'

'So is Lysander; he is a good man too,' said Hermia. Then she asked sadly, 'What will happen to me if I don't promise to marry Demetrius?'

The Duke said, 'You must either die, or spend the rest of your life unmarried, living in a religious house. The women in religious houses are good, and holy*, but those who marry and have children are happier.'

Then Lysander spoke to Hermia's father and the Duke.

'I am as good and as rich as Demetrius,' he said. 'I love Hermia and she loves me. Why shouldn't I marry her?'

But Lysander saw that the Duke was not greatly moved by his words. 'There is something else,' he added. 'Demetrius once loved Hermia's friend, Helena; and Helena loves Demetrius. Let him marry Helena.'

The Duke was very powerful and kind, but he could not change the laws of Athens.

'You must do what your father tells you to do,' he said to Hermia. 'Think carefully about this matter. In four days you must marry Demetrius—or the law will deal with you as I have said.'

Helena

When Lysander and Hermia were alone together later, Lysander said:

'Listen to me, Hermia. Let's go away from Athens and get married. Leave your father's house tomorrow night and meet me in the wood outside Athens. I'll be waiting for you there.'

'And I'll meet you there,' said Hermia. 'I promise you!'

'Keep that promise, dear Hermia!' said Lysander. 'Look! Here comes Helena!'

'Ah! Beautiful Helena,' cried Hermia. 'Where are you going?'

'Don't call me beautiful. Demetrius loves you: he loves your eyes, your voice and everything about you. Oh, teach me how you look and how you speak so that I can win his heart!'

'I don't want Demetrius to love me,' said Hermia. 'But the more I hate him, the more he follows me.'

'The more I love him,' said Helena, 'the more he hates me!'

'Don't be sad,' said Hermia. 'He won't see my face again. Tomorrow Lysander and I are going to leave

Athens. We're going to meet in that wood that you and I used to play in when we were children; and we'll go from there to another place and find new friends. And then I hope you may have Demetrius.'

When Helena was at last alone, she began to think about Hermia and Lysander:

'Demetrius doesn't love me because he loves only Hermia. I'll go and tell him about their plan. Then he can follow Hermia. He doesn't love me, but he will at least thank me for telling him; and I shall be able to go there and come back with him.'

Titania and Oberon

The next evening there were a great many people in the wood where Lysander had arranged to meet Hermia. But these people were not like other people: they were fairies. Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of the fairies, were holding their evening dances in the wood.

But only a short time before this, the fairy king and queen had quarrelled. Titania had a little boy who was her servant. Titania did not want to give the little boy to Oberon, so Oberon became very angry. When Oberon and Titania met each other in the wood at night, they always quarrelled. Then all the other fairies were afraid and hid inside the flowers.

On that evening Titania was walking through the wood with all her fairy servants when she met Oberon.

'This is a bad meeting on such a beautiful night,' said Oberon.

'Is it you?' cried Titania. 'Fairies, run away quickly. I don't want to stay with Oberon.'

'Wait,' answered Oberon. 'I am your master. Why do you quarrel with me? I only ask you to give me your little boy.'

'Don't ask me for him any more!' said Titania. 'All your fairy money won't buy this child from me. The boy's mother is dead. She was one of my favourite servants. Come, fairies! We shall get angry if we stay.'

Titania and her fairy servants danced away under the bright light of the moon.

'Well! Go!' cried Oberon; 'but before you leave this wood, I'll make you sad and sorry for what you have said.'

Puck

Then Oberon called Puck, his chief servant. Puck was able to fly very quickly to any place. He loved to do things to people which would make them angry or cause other people to laugh at them. He went in front of people who were travelling by night and led them into strange places: then he laughed at their troubles. Sometimes he turned himself into a little wild apple and hid in the cup of an old woman who talked a lot. When she lifted the cup to drink, Puck made the drink fall down over her clothes. When some old woman was telling her friends a sad story, Puck took away the seat from under her so that she sat down on the floor and everyone laughed at her.

'Come here, Puck,' called Oberon. 'Bring me the flower that young girls call Love-in-Idleness. When the liquid from it is poured on the eyes of someone who is sleeping, it will make that man or woman fall in love with the next person he sees. Bring the flower to me as quickly as you can.'

'I'll fly round the earth in forty minutes,' said Puck, and he flew away.

'I'll find Titania when she's sleeping,' said Oberon. 'Then I'll drop some of the liquid from the flower on

her eyes. When she opens her eyes, she'll fall in love with the first thing she sees, even if it is a bear, a wolf, a monkey, or any other beast. I'll make her give her little boy to me before I take this magic liquid away from her eyes.'

Helena and Demetrius

While Puck was looking for the magic flower, Demetrius and Helena passed through the wood near Oberon. Demetrius was of course following Hermia and Lysander, but he did not want Helena to go with him.

'I can never love you, Helena,' he said. 'So don't follow me.'

'But I love you,' said Helena. 'I only ask you to treat me like your dog and let me follow you.'

Oberon was watching them. They could not see the fairy king, but he saw and heard everything they did. He felt sad when he heard Demetrius telling Helena that he did not love her. And he felt even sadder when he listened to Helena's gentle replies.

Soon Puck returned with the magic flower and Oberon took part of it to put on Titania's eyes. Then he remembered poor Helena and wanted to help her.

'Take some of this flower and look through all the wood,' he commanded Puck. 'A sweet lady from Athens is in love with a young man who doesn't love her. Put some of the liquid from the magic flower on his eyes when he is sleeping, but be certain that the lady is near him. You will know the man by the clothes he is wearing. Meet me here before the morning comes.'

So Puck flew away to carry out Oberon's orders.

The magic liquid

Oberon said, 'I know a bank which is covered with sweet-smelling flowers. That is where Titania sleeps.'

He found Titania giving orders to her fairy-servants before she went to bed. Then she said, 'First sing me to sleep, and then go and do your work.'

As soon as Titania fell asleep, the fairies left to do the things that their queen had ordered. Then Oberon came and poured the magic liquid on her eyes.

'You will fall in love with the first thing you see when you awaken,' he cried. 'Open your eyes when something ugly is near.'

Bottom and the donkey's head

While Oberon was pouring the magic liquid over Titania's eyes, Puck was looking everywhere for Demetrius. On his way through the big wood, Puck saw some workmen from Athens. These workmen were simple people and were preparing to act in a play. They were going to give the play at the marriage of the Duke of Athens.

Puck thought that these players were very foolish. The most foolish of them was called Bottom. When Bottom left the others, Puck followed him and changed his head into a donkey's head.

Bottom did not know that his head had been changed. He came back to his friends when it was time for him to speak in the play. When the other workmen saw Bottom with a donkey's head, they ran away.

'Why have they run away?' Bottom wondered. 'They're trying to make me afraid. But I'm not afraid! I'll sing, and then they'll hear that I'm not afraid.'

So he began to sing loudly—with his donkey's voice.

Titania was sleeping not far away. She suddenly woke up when she heard the loud noise. She opened her eyes and of course the first person she saw was Bottom. The liquid from the magic flower began to work, and she fell in love with the big, ugly Bottom.

'What beautiful fairy awakens me from my sleep?' she said. 'Please sing again. I love to hear your voice and see you.'

Then Bottom sang again and talked foolishly. But to Titania everything he said seemed very wise.

'You are as wise as you are beautiful,' she said.

'If I were wise, I would be able to get out of this wood,' answered Bottom.

'No! No!' cried Titania. 'You must stay here. I love you. Come with me and I shall give you fairies to serve you. They will give you jewels and sing for you.'

Bottom among the fairies

Titania called for four of her fairy servants.

'Be kind to this sweet gentleman,' she said. 'Dance round him when he walks. Play in his sight. Feed him with fruit, and steal food from the bees for him.'

Although Titania was deeply in love with the foolish Bottom, even she soon grew tired of hearing him talk.

'Bring him to my fairy garden and tie up his tongue,' she ordered.

When they reached this beautiful part of the wood, Titania spoke again to Bottom.

'Come, sit with me upon this bed of flowers,' she said. 'Let me gently touch the hair on your face. Then I'll put roses on your head and kiss your beautiful big ears.'

Bottom felt very proud of himself and he loved to have fairy servants.

'Where's Peas-blossom?' he called loudly.

'Ready,' said Peas-blossom.

'Rub my head, Peas-blossom,' ordered Bottom.

Then Bottom asked for another fairy, called Cobweb.

'I want some honey—the sweet liquid of the bees. Where's Mustard-seed?'

'Ready,' said Mustard-seed. 'What do you want?'

'Nothing,' answered Bottom. Then he thought again. 'Help Peas-blossom to rub my head. I must ask someone to cut my hair. I think my face is very hairy.'

'What do you want to eat, my sweet love?' Titania asked.

'I want some dried grass,' answered Bottom. 'But don't let anyone wake me. I think I'll go to sleep.'

'Sleep in my arms, then,' said Titania. 'I love you so much!'

Hermia and Lysander

After Puck had given Bottom the donkey's head, he went to look for Demetrius. At last, he saw a young man from Athens asleep in the wood. A beautiful lady was asleep not far away.

'This must be the young man Oberon saw,' Puck thought.

Puck made certain that the beautiful lady was quite near the young man. Then he poured some of the magic liquid on the eyes of the man.

'Now he'll see her when he wakes, and he'll fall in love with her.' Puck laughed as he flew off to tell Oberon what he had done.

But Puck did not know that the young man he had seen was Lysander, and not Demetrius. The beautiful lady sleeping not far away was Hermia, of course. Things would have been all right if Lysander had woken and seen Hermia. But that did not happen.

Helena had grown tired of running after Demetrius. She could not follow him any further and she wandered sadly through the wood. Soon she arrived at the place where Lysander was sleeping.

When she saw Lysander, Helena wondered whether he was dead or asleep. She did not see any blood or a wound, so she woke him.

Lysander opened his eyes; the magic liquid did its work, and he fell in love with Helena—the first person he saw.

'Oh, Helena!' he cried. 'You are so beautiful! I would run through fire for you. I wish I had never loved Hermia, for now I love nobody but you. You're much more beautiful than Hermia. Demetrius has been cruel to you: I shall kill Demetrius.'

'Don't say these things,' said Helena. 'Demetrius loves your Hermia; but she loves you and you love her.'

'No! I don't. I don't love Hermia. I love you, Helena.'

'Why are you so unkind to me? Why are you making fun of me?'

She went sadly away into the wood again. But Lysander was not pretending; he really was in love with Helena now. So he left Hermia alone in the wood and ran after Helena.

Soon after Lysander had left her, Hermia woke up. She cried out with fear because she had had a bad dream. She called out to Lysander, but he was not near her. She was alone and afraid.

'Where is Lysander?' she cried. 'I must find him.'

Hermia and Demetrius

Hermia went to look for Lysander, whom she had always loved; but she met Demetrius.

'Where is Lysander?' she cried angrily.

Puck led Helena to the place where Demetrius was sleeping

'Why are you angry with me, when I love you so much?'

'I'm angry,' said Hermia, 'because I believe that you have killed Lysander. If you have killed him, kill me, too! Or tell me where he is.'

'I haven't killed him.'

'Then tell me that he is alive. Then I'll go away and never see you again.'

'I don't know where he is.'

Hermia ran away.

'It's useless to follow her when she's like this!' said Demetrius. 'I'll stay here and get some sleep.'

Oberon and Puck had been watching Demetrius and Hermia, and they had heard every word they said.

'What have you done?' said Oberon to Puck. 'You have put the liquid on the eyes of the wrong man! I'll put it in this man's eyes. He must wake and love Helena. Go! Go quickly and bring Helena here before he wakes.'

The mixed-up lovers

So Puck led Helena to the place where Demetrius was sleeping. She was followed by Lysander, who was still talking about his love for her.

'Why are you making fun of me?' said Helena.

'I love you!'

'Tell that to Hermia!'

The sound of their voices woke Demetrius. Helena was the first woman he saw, so he fell in love with her.

'Oh Helena!' he cried. 'Beautiful Helena! Your eyes are like jewels. Oh, let me kiss you, my princess!'

'I see that you both want to make fun of me! Hate me, as I know you do, but don't join together to hurt me.'

'You are unkind, Demetrius,' said Lysander. 'You love Hermia; I know that you do. I give you Hermia, but let me love Helena. I love her and will love her till I die.'

'Lysander, keep your Hermia!' cried Demetrius. 'All my love for her has gone.'

So both Lysander and Demetrius shouted that they loved Helena.

Then Hermia came, and saw Lysander.

'Why did you leave me alone in the wood?' she asked.

'I left you because I love Helena now.'

Hermia did not believe him. Helena now thought that all three had made a plan to hurt her.

'Why have you joined in this plan to make a fool of me?' she asked Hermia angrily. 'You are very unkind to laugh at me. Have you forgotten that we used to be friends at school together? It isn't friendly to join the two men in laughing at me. You have told Lysander to follow me, and you have made Demetrius call me beautiful. You shouldn't laugh at me. You see how foolish I am. I'll go back to Athens and not follow you any more. I leave my foolish heart behind.'

Lysander cried, 'Helena, I love you!'

'I love you more than he does,' shouted Demetrius.

The two men were growing angrier and angrier with each other. Then both men walked away to another part of the wood in order to fight for Helena's love.

Oberon gives orders

Oberon was now very angry indeed with Puck.

'Did this happen because you were careless?' he asked Puck. 'Or did you mean to pour the magic liquid on the wrong person?'

'Believe me, King Oberon,' said Puck, 'it was a mistake. You said, "You will know the man by the

clothes he is wearing.'' ' Puck laughed. 'But I'm glad this happened; it's fun to watch them quarrelling.'

'Demetrius and Lysander have gone to look for a good place to fight,' said Oberon. 'Fill the night with a thick, black cloud. Then lead the two men far from each other. When they are tired of looking for each other, they'll lie down and fall asleep. Pour this magic liquid on Lysander's eyes. It will make his old love for Hermia come back to him when he wakes. Then everyone will be happy. They'll think that all this has been only a dream.'

So Puck prepared to fly away to carry out these orders.

'While you do that, I'll go to Titania,' said Oberon. 'I'll take the little boy from her. Then I'll set her free and she will stop loving the foolish man with the donkey's head.'

Music!

When Oberon found Titania, she was asleep. She had put beautiful flowers round Bottom's donkey's head. Oberon found it easy to take the little boy from her while she was sleeping. Then he was ready to take away the magic liquid from her eyes.

He touched her eyes with another flower and gently woke her.

'My Oberon!' Titania cried. 'What dreams I have had! I thought I was in love with a donkey.'

'There he is,' replied Oberon, pointing to Bottom asleep near Titania.

'How did this happen?' asked Titania. 'I can't bear the sight of him now.'

Puck came back after doing as Oberon had ordered. Oberon turned to him and said:

'Take off the donkey's head, and make all these five—Bottom, Demetrius, Lysander, Helena, and Hermia—fall into a deep sleep and forget what has happened.'

'Music!' cried Titania.

'Music!' cried Oberon. 'Come, my queen, take hands with me and dance—dance round the world faster than the wandering moon.'

To Athens

Early that morning, the Duke of Athens and Hermia's father entered the forest. They came with a great many friends and servants. They reached the place where Hermia, Helena, Lysander, and Demetrius were sleeping. The four young people were woken by the voices of the Duke and his friends.

Lysander now loved only Hermia, and Demetrius loved only Helena.

Demetrius said, 'My love for Hermia has gone—gone like the snow, gone like something that I dreamt when I was a child. I love only Helena now.'

The wise Duke knew that this was a good ending. He did not want to make Hermia marry Demetrius now. And Hermia's father knew that he could never order the marriage between his daughter and Demetrius.

'Lysander shall marry Hermia,' said the Duke, 'and Demetrius shall marry Helena. Come with us to Athens, where I, too, am to be married. Let's go to Athens at once. There we'll all be married.'

Hamlet

Hamlet's sorrow

Gertrude was the Queen of Denmark. Two months after the death of the King of Denmark, she married Claudius, his brother. She did not know that Claudius was evil. People believed that he had killed his brother so that he himself might become king—instead of Hamlet. Hamlet was the son of Gertrude and the king who had just died.

Hamlet loved his dead father and was very sad at his death. His mother's marriage made Hamlet even more unhappy. He became tired of the world; he had no more pleasure in the things he used to do. He stopped wanting to read, to play, and to do all the things that young men love to do. 'Why has my mother so soon forgotten my father?' he thought. 'He was such a good husband to her, and so good a father to me.'

Claudius called all his servants and friends. He told them of his sadness at the death of Hamlet's father. Then he told them of his joy at his own marriage.

He turned to Hamlet: 'Now, Hamlet, you are like a son to me. Why do these clouds of sadness still hang over you? Why are you so unhappy?'

'Try not to think so much about your dead father,' said Hamlet's mother. 'You know that everything that lives must die some time. Why do you still seem to be sad?'

'I am not just pretending to be sad,' said Hamlet. 'I wear my black clothes because I really am sad at my father's death.'

Neither Hamlet's mother nor Claudius could do anything to make Hamlet happier. He would not take off his black clothes and he would not laugh. He felt angry that his mother should marry a man so evil as his

uncle. And he wondered how she could marry Claudius so soon after his father's death.

'My uncle is completely different from my father. And my mother married him so soon after my father's death,' thought Hamlet. 'It will break my heart, because I can't speak to anyone about it.'

Horatio speaks

Horatio, Hamlet's friend, came to him and told him a strange story. Horatio said, 'The spirit of your father was seen on the walls of the castle in the middle of the night. It has visited the castle on two or three nights and the guards have been very frightened. I saw it: it was dressed like the old king before a battle. I tried to speak to it, but it didn't answer. Once it lifted up its head as if it wanted to speak, but it remained silent.'

'Did you see its face?' said Hamlet.

'Yes, we did,' Horatio answered. 'It seemed sad rather than angry.'

'I shall watch tonight,' said Hamlet. 'Perhaps it will come again. I'll speak to it. I'll come to you on the walls between eleven and twelve. Say nothing about this.'

Horatio went away.

'My father's ghost!' Hamlet thought. 'Something is wrong. Evil can't be hidden. When night comes, I shall know.'

The ghost

When night came, Hamlet joined the soldiers who were guarding the walls. He met them at the place where the ghost had appeared. It was very cold there, but they could hear voices laughing and singing inside the castle.

Suddenly Horatio cried out. The ghost had appeared again!

When he saw his father's ghost, Hamlet soon forgot his fear and spoke bravely to it.

'Whether you are something good or something bad, I'll speak to you. You appear to be so much like my father that I shall call you by your name—Hamlet, King, Father! Tell me why you have come and what we should do to help you.'

The ghost held up its hand and pointed away from the soldiers.

'It wants to speak to you alone,' cried Horatio.

'Don't go with it!' said one of the soldiers.

'It may lead you into the sea or take you to the top of a high cliff,' cried Horatio.

Hamlet was not afraid. He followed the ghost.

Hamlet's promise

As soon as Hamlet and the ghost were alone, the ghost spoke. 'I am the ghost of your father. I must walk in the night until the wrongs done while I was alive are set right. Listen! Claudius killed your father. When he was sleeping he poured poisonous* liquid into his ears and caused his death. He killed his brother, and then he took his crown and his queen. And this man, Claudius, is now King of Denmark! Evil must be paid for! He must die. Deal with him. But do not hurt your mother.'

'I promise. I'll forget everything I have learned from books,' said Hamlet. 'I shall remember only my promise to you!'

When Hamlet's friends ran up to him, they asked him to tell them what the ghost had said. But Hamlet did not tell even his best friend what had happened.

'Promise me that you will never tell anyone what you

have seen tonight,' he said. 'And, if I seem to act strangely, don't tell anyone the cause.'

Ophelia

Hamlet did not want Claudius to think that anything was wrong. So he pretended to be mad. He even pretended to Ophelia, the beautiful lady whom he loved, that he was mad.

Ophelia's father, Polonius, was the king's friend. Polonius had always believed that Hamlet did not really love his daughter. He told Ophelia not to see Hamlet any more. So Ophelia sent back Hamlet's letters and said that she did not wish to see him.

When Ophelia next met Hamlet, she was surprised to see him dressed in a strange way. His looks were strange and wild. Hamlet took her arm and held it in a way that hurt her. He looked for a long time into her face. Then he walked away.

Ophelia was so unhappy that she told her father about Hamlet's strange manner. Polonius decided that Hamlet was really in love with Ophelia. He believed that Ophelia had caused Hamlet to become mad. So he went at once to see the king.

Old Polonius

'I have found out the reason for Hamlet's madness,' Polonius told Claudius.

Then he took out one of Hamlet's letters to Ophelia and read it to the king and queen. In the letter Hamlet told Ophelia that she should never doubt that he loved her. Polonius said, 'I have ordered Ophelia not to see Hamlet again nor to receive his letters.'

Claudius did not fully believe that Ophelia had caused

Hamlet to become mad. He decided to watch Ophelia meet Hamlet and to find out for himself how Hamlet acted.

'Look, here comes Hamlet now,' said the queen.

'Ha! Hamlet,' said Polonius. 'Do you know me?'

'Oh yes. I know you well. You sell fish. Men who sell fish are good men. Good men are few: there is not one good man in ten thousand.'

'No, I don't sell fish,' replied Polonius.

'Have you a daughter?'

'Yes, I have.'

'Take good care of her. Don't let her walk in the sun.'

Polonius left him.

'Oh! these old fools!' said Hamlet.

'He's quite mad,' Polonius thought. 'And yet I'm not sure. I must arrange for him to meet my daughter.'

The actors

Claudius, who trusted no one, sent for two young men who had been Hamlet's friends when they were all children. Claudius wanted them to try to find out the reason for Hamlet's strange ways.

When Hamlet saw them, he wondered why they had come to visit him.

'Why did you come here?' he asked. 'Were you ordered to come or did you come freely?'

'We were sent for.'

'I'll tell you why you were sent for,' said Hamlet. 'I have lately lost all my joy in the beauty of the earth and sky. Man is a wonderful thing—so wise, so beautiful; but man does not please me now, nor woman.'

'Perhaps these players may please you. They are coming to act a play in the castle.'

'Who are they? Who are these actors?'

'They are the actors you used to like to see,' his friends told him.

Soon the actors arrived, and Hamlet was very pleased to see them. He asked one of the actors to say a few lines to him, telling about the death of an old king. The actor told how the old king was killed and his city was burned. Then he spoke about the sad queen, who ran about the castle with a cloth on her head instead of a crown. The actor told the story so well that he even had tears in his eyes.

When Hamlet saw the actor weeping, he felt very angry with himself.

'This actor can weep for a queen he never knew,' thought Hamlet. 'But I have done nothing at all about my father's death.'

Suddenly he thought of a plan. 'I'll ask the actors to act a story which is like the death of my father. I'll ask Claudius to see the play and see what he himself did. This may prove to me that Claudius killed my father. Then I shall be completely certain that the ghost spoke the truth.'

The play

That evening Hamlet talked to some of the actors about their work. He also met Horatio. He said to his old friend, 'Watch Claudius carefully during the play. Watch his face.'

When the actors were ready to begin the play, Hamlet sat next to Ophelia. Claudius, who knew nothing of Hamlet's plan, was there with the queen and all their friends.

The play began. The queen in the play told the king how much she loved him. She promised never to marry a second husband if the king died before her.

'Only women who kill their husbands marry again,' she said.

The king in the play fell asleep in his garden and was killed by his brother's son.

Claudius stood up. He could bear no more of the play. It was so much like the way in which he had killed his own brother.

'What is it, my lord?' asked the queen. 'What is the matter?'

Polonius cried, 'Stop the play!'

'Light! Light!' shouted the king. 'Away! All go away!'

Hamlet was sure now that the ghost had spoken the truth. He was now certain that his uncle had killed his father. All that remained for him to do was to carry out the ghost's command.

Hamlet's mother

The queen sent a servant to Hamlet asking him to go to her room. While he was on his way to his mother's room, he saw Claudius kneeling and praying. It seemed to him that Claudius was telling God about the evil that he had done.

'I can kill him now,' thought Hamlet, 'but if I kill him while he is praying, he'll go to heaven. I must choose another time to kill him—when he is angry or asleep.'

Polonius was hiding behind a curtain in the queen's room. He had promised Claudius that he would hide and listen to everything Hamlet said. The queen knew that Polonius was there.

Hamlet went into the queen's room.

'What's the matter, mother?' he asked.

'You have made your father very angry.'

'"My father"! Claudius is not my father. You have done a great wrong to my father.'

'What is it? A rat?' cried Hamlet

'Have you forgotten me?' said the queen.

'No! You are the queen, wife of your husband's brother, and you are my mother. I wish that you were not! No, do not move. Sit down, while I tell you all about yourself.'

'What! Do you want to kill me?' she cried. Then she shouted, 'Help! Help!'

The death of Polonius

When he heard the queen's cry, Polonius shouted from behind the curtain, 'Help! Help!'

'What is it? A rat?' cried Hamlet. He drew his sword and struck through the curtain. He thought that Claudius was hiding there, and he hoped that he had killed him. Then he drew back the curtain and saw that he had killed Polonius.

'Oh! What have you done?' cried the queen.

'What I have done,' said Hamlet, 'is almost as bad a thing as killing a king and marrying his brother.'

'How dare you speak to me like that?'

Then Hamlet showed her two pictures. One was of his father and the other was of his uncle, Claudius.

'Look at this picture—and at this. They are the pictures of two brothers. See the grace that there was on my father's face: he looks like a god. Now look at the picture of my uncle. How could you forget about my father so quickly and be happy with my uncle? What made you marry him? You can't call it love, because at your age the blood is cold. What was it that made you blind?'

'Oh Hamlet, say no more!' the queen cried.

'How can you live with such a man—a man not worth the twentieth part of your first husband?'

'Say no more! No more!'

The ghost again

As Hamlet became more and more angry, the ghost appeared before him.

'Oh!' Hamlet cried. 'Have you come to tell me that, in my anger, I have forgotten to do what I have promised?'

'He's mad,' the queen said to herself.

'Do not forget your promise,' said the ghost. 'But see how afraid your mother is. Speak to her, Hamlet. Help her.'

'What's the matter, mother?' said Hamlet.

'What's the matter with *you*?' cried the queen. 'You look at nothing, and speak to it. Oh my son, what are you looking at?'

'At him! At him!'

'Who are you speaking to?'

'Can't you see anything there? Can't you hear anything?' cried Hamlet.

'Nothing at all.'

'Look there! See how he moves away. It's my father.'

'There is no ghost. You see it because you are mad,' his mother replied.

'I am not mad. My father's ghost has come here because of what you have done. Pray to God to forgive you. Don't go back to the king and don't behave as his wife any more.'

'You *are* mad!'

'I'm not mad; but you may let Claudius think I'm mad, and don't tell him what I have said to you. Promise me that. Good night.'

To England

Claudius knew that something was wrong when he saw Hamlet's mother.

'How is Hamlet?' he asked.

'He's as mad as the sea and the wind when they fight each other,' cried the queen. 'When he heard something move behind the curtain in my room, he cried in his mad anger "A rat! A rat!" and killed Polonius.'

Claudius said 'The mad young prince is dangerous: we must send him away to England.'

He sent for Hamlet and said, 'I am sending you to England so that you may be safe. The people of Denmark may try to kill you when they hear how Polonius died. Get ready quickly; the ship is waiting.'

Claudius did not tell Hamlet that he had written a letter to the King of England. He sent this letter with Hamlet's two 'friends', and they knew that in it he asked the king to kill Hamlet as soon as he reached England.

Hamlet's escape

When he was at sea, Hamlet began to feel certain that Claudius had planned some evil. He did not trust his two friends. One night he got up and looked for the letter that his friends were carrying. He opened the letter and read that Claudius had asked the King of England to kill him. He changed the names in the letter so that it asked the King of England to kill his two 'friends'.

On the next day, Hamlet's ship met some pirates★, who attacked the ship to take its goods. During the battle Hamlet jumped on the pirates' ship to fight. While he was there, his own ship sailed away.

The pirates were kind to Hamlet when they found out that he was a prince. They made him promise to do something for them later in return for his freedom. They put him safely on shore in Denmark.

From this place Hamlet wrote a letter to his friend Horatio, telling him about the sea-fight with the pirates

and his return to Denmark. He asked Horatio to send a letter to Claudius. In the letter Hamlet said, 'I have been left without money or clothes on the shore of your country. I shall see you tomorrow and tell you about my strange return to Denmark.'

Ophelia's grave

When Hamlet returned home the next day, he saw two old men digging a grave.

'Whose grave is this?' he asked.

But the old men did not say that it was Ophelia's grave.

Ophelia had begun to grow mad ever since Hamlet killed Polonius, her father. She could hardly believe that the man she loved had done such a thing. She began to gather flowers and give them to the people at the court. One day she wanted to get some flowers from the branch of a tree over a stream. While she was climbing on the branch, it suddenly broke and Ophelia fell. Her dress, heavy with water, pulled her down to the bottom, and she died.

While Hamlet was at the grave, the king and queen and their servants came, carrying the body of Ophelia. Laertes, her brother, was with them.

Hamlet did not know that all this had happened. He saw Laertes standing near the grave and talking about Ophelia.

Then he saw the queen throw some flowers on the grave.

'Sweet flowers to a sweet lady,' said the queen. 'I hoped that you would be my Hamlet's wife. I wanted to throw flowers on your marriage-bed, not on your grave.'

Suddenly Laertes cried, 'Don't throw any more earth into the grave. Let me hold her once more in my arms!'

Then he jumped wildly into Ophelia's grave.

Hamlet ran forwards and jumped into the grave beside Laertes.

'I loved Ophelia more than forty thousand brothers could love her,' he shouted.

At once Laertes began to fight Hamlet. The servants who were standing near the grave stopped the two angry men. They pulled them out of the grave. Hamlet could not understand why Laertes was so angry with him. He did not know that Claudius wanted Laertes to kill Hamlet, and so he had told Laertes lies about the way Polonius, his father, was killed.

Hamlet's death is planned

After Hamlet had left Ophelia's grave, Claudius spoke again to Laertes about their plan to kill Hamlet.

They planned to arrange a fight with swords between Laertes and Hamlet. The swords that were used in such fights were not dangerous: they had something at the end which covered their points. Claudius told Laertes to use a sword without anything at the end: this sword would be very dangerous and could kill a man.

Laertes wanted to make certain that he would kill Hamlet, so they also planned to put some poison on the end of his sword. Claudius promised to give Hamlet some poison to drink if Laertes did not wound him.

One of the king's servants came to Hamlet, telling him that he must fight Laertes.

'Laertes will beat you,' said Horatio. 'No one can win against Laertes in a fight with swords.'

'I don't think so,' Hamlet replied. 'Since Laertes went to France some time ago, I have fought a lot with my sword.' Then he added, 'But I feel that something is wrong: there is some plan to kill me.'

The fight

Laertes entered the big hall of the castle with the king and queen and their servants.

Hamlet tried to act like a friend. 'Come,' he said, 'let us have a friendly fight.'

At first Hamlet seemed to be winning. Claudius offered him a cup of poison, but Hamlet did not drink it. 'I'll drink it later,' he said. But the queen wanted to show Hamlet how happy she was to see him winning. So she picked up the cup of poison and drank it.

Soon Laertes wounded Hamlet with his poisoned sword. In the fight which followed, Hamlet and Laertes lost their swords and, by mistake, Hamlet took Laertes' sword. Then he wounded Laertes with the poisoned sword.

Suddenly the queen fell to the floor.

'The queen!' Hamlet cried. 'What's the matter?'

'She feels sick at the sight of the blood running from your wound,' said Claudius.

But before she died, the queen cried, 'The drink, the drink. It's poison!'

Hamlet dies

'Shut all the doors!' cried Hamlet.

Laertes fell, wounded and poisoned.

'Nothing can save you, Hamlet,' he cried. 'I have wounded you with a poisoned sword. I have been wounded with it too. Your mother has drunk a cup of poison. The king has caused all this to happen.'

Hamlet looked at the sword in his hand. 'Poisoned and sharp!' he said. He ran towards Claudius. 'Here is the best place for a poisoned sword,' he cried as he drove the point into the king's heart.

Then he watched Claudius fall and die.

'It is right that the king should die,' cried the dying Laertes. 'He mixed the poison which has killed him. Forgive me, Hamlet. It was not you who caused my father's death and mine.'

Hamlet knew that he was dying. He turned to his oldest friend, Horatio. 'Horatio,' he said. 'I am dying. Tell the world what has happened.'

'There is still some poison left in this cup,' cried Horatio. 'I shall die, too.'

'Don't drink it, if you ever loved me,' Hamlet cried. 'You must live and tell my story to the world. Then people will know the truth.—The rest is silence.'

The Tempest

Prospero and Miranda

In Italy there was a duke named Prospero. He was a very wise man. But he spent so much of his time in studying that he let his younger brother Antonio rule the country for him. He trusted Antonio and was happy to spend his time among his books. But Antonio began to wish that he was a real duke and ruler of the country. He wanted to kill Prospero and become the duke, himself.

Antonio made a plan with the King of Naples, Prospero's old enemy. He promised to pay the King of Naples some money each year if he would help him to kill Prospero.

One dark night Antonio ordered his men to open the gates of Milan, the beautiful city in which Prospero lived. The King of Naples came into Milan with his army and seized Prospero and his little girl, Miranda. Antonio could not kill Prospero there because he knew how much the people of Milan loved him. He wanted everyone to think that Prospero and Miranda had died by chance. So the soldiers took Prospero and Miranda, and put them on a ship. When the ship was far out to sea, they made Prospero and Miranda get into a small boat and left them in the middle of the sea to die.

The King of Naples had ordered Gonzalo to carry out his plan. But Gonzalo was a kind man: he had to obey, but he had put food and water, clothes and books in the boat.

Miranda was only three years old and did not understand danger. She talked and laughed in the little boat; she gave Prospero hope and made him brave.

At last, they reached an island. They lived on the

island for twelve years. Miranda grew from a little girl into a beautiful young woman.

Caliban

When Prospero and Miranda first arrived on the island, Caliban was the only person there. Caliban was more like a wild beast than a man.

Prospero took Caliban to the cave in which he and Miranda lived. There he taught Caliban to speak like a man. He tried to treat Caliban like his own child. But Caliban was bad, so Prospero made him work for them like a servant.

There was also on the island a fairy called Ariel. Caliban's mother, before she died, had shut Ariel inside a tree. He was in the tree for twelve years before Prospero landed on the island. Prospero had learnt magic from his books, and was able to set Ariel free. Ariel was a good and gentle fairy, and he promised to serve Prospero. But he asked Prospero to give him back his freedom later. Ariel could change into any shape he wanted and could travel as fast as light. He could change himself so that no one except Prospero could see him.

The storm (the tempest)

One day, after being on the island for twelve years, Prospero used his magic to cause a great storm. Miranda saw a ship in great danger. 'Oh, my dear father,' she said, 'if you have raised this fearful storm by your magic, help those people on the ship. Look! It will be broken to pieces and they will all be killed.'

'Don't be afraid,' said Prospero. 'I have arranged that no one on that ship shall be hurt.'

Antonio, and the King of Naples were on the ship—

and Gonzalo, who had put food and clothes and books in Prospero's boat. There were also Ferdinand, the king's son, and Sebastian, the king's brother.

'I have done all this,' said Prospero, 'because of you, Miranda. Do you remember how you came to this island?'

But Miranda could not remember how they arrived on the island.

'It is time for me to tell you what happened,' he said. Then he told her how Antonio had taken away his country from him and how they had been left at sea in a boat.

'Now my enemies have come to this island. This is the reason why I have made this storm.'

The king's son

Then Prospero used his magic to make Miranda fall asleep, and he called for Ariel.

'Have you done everything that I commanded?'

'Yes, my master, I went into the ship and made fire in every part and filled their hearts with fear. Everybody left the ship. Ferdinand jumped into the sea.'

'Are they all safe?'

'Yes. I brought the king's son, Ferdinand, to a different part of the island. He is sitting alone and weeping because he thinks that his father is dead. I have brought the ship safely into a quiet bay, and I have made all the sailors fall asleep.'

'Ariel, you have worked well, but now there is more work for you to do,' said Prospero. He spoke his next order quietly in Ariel's ear.

Ariel flew off to Ferdinand and found him still sitting on the grass. Ariel started singing.

'Where is that music?' said Ferdinand. 'Is it on the

earth or in the air? I'll follow it. . . Now it has stopped! . . . Now it starts again! It draws me on.'

Ariel led Ferdinand towards the place where Miranda and Prospero were sitting.

Prospero said, 'Look, Miranda. What do you see there?'

Miranda had never seen any other man except her father and Caliban. When she saw this beautiful young prince, she said, 'What is it? Is it a spirit? He is so beautiful that he must be a god.'

'No, he eats and sleeps as we do. He's a man. He was on the ship.'

Then Ferdinand saw Miranda and thought, 'This is a magic island, and that was her music.' Then he said, 'O, you wonder! Are you a woman?—or not?'

'I am no wonder, sir, but certainly a woman.'

'You speak as I do—as we do in Naples. I am from Naples. My father was the king, but I haven't seen him since the ship was lost.'

Ferdinand and Miranda

Prospero was delighted that the two young people were beginning to fall in love with each other so quickly. But he was very wise; he did not want them to find things too easy. He wanted to make certain that they really did love each other. So he began to speak unkindly to Ferdinand.

'Why have you come so secretly to this island? Do you plan to take it from me? Come with me and I shall tie your neck and feet together. You shall drink sea-water and eat the food that animals eat.'

'I won't go with you,' cried Ferdinand, drawing out his sword.

Then Prospero used his magic so that the young

prince could not move.

'Why are you so unkind to him?' cried Miranda. 'He seems a good man.'

'Be silent, girl,' said Prospero. 'I shall be very angry with you if you say one word more. You have only seen two men: this young man and Caliban. Most men are far better than this.'

'I don't want to see a better man than him,' cried Miranda.

'Come, young man,' said Prospero. 'Follow me. You have no power to do anything except what I order.'

'I am forced to follow him,' thought Ferdinand. 'I am walking as if in a dream. But my weakness and this man's hard words would seem light to me if I might see this beautiful girl every day.'

'My father is kinder than he appears,' Miranda told him. 'It is very strange for him to be like this and treat you so.'

'Do you love me?'

Prospero continued to treat Ferdinand unkindly. He made the young prince carry heavy pieces of wood and put them in order—just like the work that he gave Caliban to do. Ferdinand found pleasure in this work, because he felt that he was serving Miranda. But Miranda wept when she saw him.

'Please,' said Miranda, 'don't work so hard. Take a rest; my father will study his books for the next three hours.'

'Oh my dear lady,' said Ferdinand, 'I dare not! I must finish my work before I take my rest.'

'Sit down and I'll carry the wood while you are resting.'

But Ferdinand would not let her help him: 'I would

rather break my back than sit lazily and let you do my work. I'm not tired when you are near me. Tell me your name so that I may say it in my prayers.'

'Miranda—Oh my father! I had promised not to tell it!'

'I have liked many women, for several reasons, but in all there was something that I could not love. But you, Miranda, are so perfect you are made of every other woman's best.'

'I haven't seen any other woman,' said Miranda, 'nor any other man. I wouldn't want to have with me any other man but you; nor can I think of any other shape but yours.'

All this time Prospero had been watching and listening. He was not studying his books but was standing near them. He was very happy at everything he heard: he was even glad that Miranda had broken her promise to him. He was sure now that Miranda and Ferdinand loved each other deeply.

'This goes exactly as I wished,' he said. 'My daughter will be Queen of Naples.'

'Miranda,' said Ferdinand, 'I am a prince, and I think I am a king. When first I saw you, my heart became yours.'

'Do you love me?'

'Oh heaven! Oh earth! I love and honour you more than anything in the world!'

'I am a fool to weep at what I am glad of. I am your wife if you will marry me.'

'My dearest, here is my hand.'

'And mine, with my heart in it.'

Prospero came to Ferdinand and said, 'I have been hard to you, but that was to make a trial of your love, to find out how truly you loved Miranda. Now I am going to give you a part of my own life—that for which I live. You may marry my daughter.'

The King of Naples in danger

On another part of the island the King of Naples was looking for his son, Ferdinand. The good old man Gonzalo was with him. The king and Gonzalo fell asleep. But Antonio and Sebastian, brother of the king, were still awake.

'If the king were dead instead of just sleeping,' said Antonio, 'you, Sebastian, would be king. Do you understand me?'

'Yes,' said Sebastian, 'I think I do. I remember you took the place of your brother, Prospero.'

'True. And look how well I take his place. I am happy. You kill Gonzalo; I'll kill the king.'

The two men drew out their swords. They were ready to kill the king and Gonzalo. Then Ariel came. Ariel had caused the king and Gonzalo to fall asleep. He now woke them.

'Why have you drawn out your swords?' asked the king. 'Why do you look so strange?'

'What's the matter?' cried Gonzalo.

'We heard a noise—like a wild animal,' Sebastian answered.

'Yes,' said Antonio, 'a fearful noise, of many dangerous beasts.'

'I heard nothing,' said the king. 'Did you hear this noise, Gonzalo?'

'A strange noise did wake me,' the old nobleman said. 'I pray that Ferdinand will be kept safe from these beasts.'

Both Gonzalo and the king felt certain that Ferdinand was on the island and so they continued to look for him.

At last Gonzalo said, 'I can't go any further. I must rest here.'

'Sit down and rest,' said the king. 'I must give up

hope. My son is dead.'

Antonio look at Sebastian. 'I'm glad he has lost hope,' he said. 'We'll try again.'

'We'll take the next chance,' said Sebastian.

'Let it be tonight.'

'Yes,' said Sebastian. 'Tonight!'

Magic

The king and his friends heard the sound of music. Strange shapes brought a table covered with food. Then the strange shapes danced, and suddenly disappeared.

'Now I shall believe all the strange stories told by men who travel into far-off places,' said Antonio.

'No one in Naples would believe me if I told them about this,' said Gonzalo. 'These strange shapes seem kinder and gentler than people. They have left us in a strange manner.'

'That doesn't matter,' answered Sebastian. 'They have left their food here, and we are very hungry.'

The king and his party were just reaching out to take the food when Ariel arrived. Ariel had changed into a very strange shape: he had the body and face of a woman but a bird's wings and feet. When he moved his wings, all the food flew up into the air out of sight.

'You are not fit to live with other men!' Ariel said to Antonio, Sebastian and the King of Naples. 'You have been thrown up on this island by the storm. Such men as you hang, or kill themselves. You are not fit to live!'

The three men drew their swords. But they could not move because they were stopped by Prospero's magic powers.

'You fools, you can't hurt us with your swords,' cried Ariel. 'Remember that you sent Prospero and his little girl on an old boat. You left them in the middle of the

Ariel had changed into a very strange shape

sea to die. The sea, the land, and all the animals are angry with you for that. They have taken away Prince Ferdinand. You will suffer on this magic island until you ask to be forgiven.'

Prospero forgives his enemies

The king, Antonio and Sebastian could not find a way out of the wood. At last, Prospero sent Ariel to watch them. When Ariel returned to Prospero, he told him that the three men wanted to be forgiven for what they had done in the past.

'If you saw them now, you would be sorry for them and forgive them,' Ariel told Prospero.

'If even a fairy like you feels sorry, then a man like me should certainly feel sorry,' said Prospero. 'They have suffered enough,' he decided. 'Bring them here.'

Ariel returned with the king, Antonio, Sebastian, and Gonzalo. He led them into a circle that Prospero had drawn on the ground. They stood there, still and silent. They were under Prospero's magic power.

Prospero turned to the King of Naples and Sebastian, the king's brother. He made them remember that they had left him and Miranda to die at sea. Next he spoke to his brother, Antonio, who had taken Prospero's country from him and later planned with Sebastian to kill the King of Naples.

Prospero saw that they still did not know who he was. He ordered Ariel to bring him the clothes that he wore when he was the Duke of Milan. Prospero put on his rich clothes.

'I am Prospero, the Duke of Milan,' he told them. 'I am happy to see all of you here.'

The King of Naples asked Prospero to forgive him.

Prospero even forgave his brother Antonio. 'But you

must give me back my country,' he said.

The King of Naples promised to make sure that this was done.

'As you have given me back my country,' said Prospero, 'I shall give you something which will make you very happy.'

A last command for Ariel

Prospero took the king and his friends to the cave and told them to look inside. There the king saw Ferdinand, the son he thought was dead. He watched Ferdinand and Miranda talking happily together.

'Who is this girl?' he asked his son. 'Is she a fairy?'

'No, father, she is not a fairy but a woman,' replied Ferdinand. 'I have asked her to be my wife, and she has promised to marry me. She is Miranda, daughter of Prospero. He has been good and kind to me like a father.'

'Then I shall be like a father to Miranda,' said the king.

Ariel went to the king's ship and woke all the sleeping sailors. Then he brought them to Prospero's cave. The sailors told the king that their ship was safe near the shore and was ready to sail back to Naples.

'In the morning,' said Prospero, 'I shall take you to your ship and we shall go to Naples. There I hope to see Ferdinand and Miranda married. After their marriage I shall return to Milan.'

Before he left the island, Prospero set Ariel free. 'My little Ariel, give us good winds to take the ship quickly home,' he said. 'This is my last command to you.'

Julius Caesar

'I am Caesar'

About two thousand years ago a great man named Julius Caesar lived in Rome. He ruled Rome wisely, but he began to grow very proud. He had great power, but he wanted even more power. Many people thought he wanted to become a king, although the people of Rome offered him a crown three times, and each time Julius Caesar said 'No'.

There were a few men who thought that Julius Caesar had too much power.

'We are all free men,' said Cassius, an important Roman. 'I am as free as Caesar. He should not be a king or a god: he is only a man like me. Why do the people of Rome let him act like a god?'

Brutus was a friend of Caesar's, but he was also troubled by what was happening to Caesar.

'I am afraid that the people want Caesar for their king,' he said. 'I love Caesar, but I don't want him to become king.'

Cassius remembered the time when he and Caesar were in the water crossing a river. 'Caesar cried to me for help because the stream was carrying him away. Another time when he was ill he cried out for water like a sick girl. Caesar is no god. He is a man like all of us.'

Mark Antony was Caesar's closest friend. Caesar trusted him more than any other man. Caesar saw Cassius talking to Brutus. 'Let me have men around me who are fat,' said Caesar. 'Cassius is thin and has a hungry look. He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous.'

'Don't be afraid of him,' said Antony. 'He isn't dangerous.'

'I wish he were fatter. I am not afraid, but I keep away from him. He reads a lot; he watches men. He never laughs. Such men as he are never happy when they can see a man who is greater than themselves.'

'Don't be afraid,' said Mark Antony. 'Cassius isn't dangerous. He's a good Roman.'

'I'm not afraid of him,' Caesar replied proudly. 'I'm not afraid of anyone, because I am Caesar.'

Brutus decides

That night there was a great storm. Many strange things happened. It was the biggest storm that men had ever seen. Wild animals ran through the streets of the city, but did not hurt anyone. Men covered in fire walked about Rome. The old men in the city knew that something bad was going to happen.

The noise of the storm stopped many men from sleeping. One of the men who could not sleep that night was Brutus. But it was not the storm which had woken him. Brutus was still very unhappy about Caesar. After his talk with Cassius, he could not trust Caesar.

It was near daylight. Brutus was walking about in his garden. He called a servant.

'Put a lamp in my room, and when it is lighted, call me.'

The servant went away.

'Caesar must die,' Brutus decided. 'He isn't my enemy as a man, but for the good of all he ought to die. He wants to be king: that will change him and will make him dangerous.'

The servant returned. 'The lamp is burning in your room,' he said. 'I found this letter near the window. It wasn't there when I went to bed.'

Brutus read the letter: 'Brutus, you are asleep. Awake

and see yourself. Shall Rome be under one man's rule? Speak! Strike!'

The plan

Just as Brutus finished reading this letter, his servant came to tell him that Cassius and some other men had come to see him. Their faces were hidden. Brutus knew that they had come to plan Caesar's death.

Cassius and his friends were not sure that Brutus wanted to join them in their plan to kill Caesar. At first they talked about the sunrise and other matters which were not important. Then Cassius took Brutus to one side and spoke softly to him. Brutus turned to the others and shook hands with each one of them to show that he would join in their plan.

'Let us make a solemn promise to kill Caesar,' said Cassius.

'We have already promised to do it,' Brutus replied. 'We are good Romans. No true Roman needs to make a solemn promise to keep him to his duty.'

'We ought to kill Caesar's friend, Mark Antony, too,' said Cassius. 'He may become dangerous if we kill Caesar. It is safer if he and Caesar die together.'

'No,' said Brutus. 'We must not do more killing than we need. If we kill Antony, that would be like cutting off a man's head and then cutting off his arms. Antony is only like an arm of Caesar's.'

'But I'm afraid of him,' said Cassius.

'I wish that we could kill Caesar's spirit and not his body,' said Brutus. 'We aren't going to kill Caesar because we don't like him. Let everyone see that we are killing Caesar only because it is necessary for the good of Rome.'

Brutus and his friends then arranged to meet Caesar

on the following day and kill him as he went on his way to the Senate*.

'Perhaps Caesar won't leave his house tomorrow,' said Cassius. 'This storm may make him change his mind. He believes in dreams and things which seem to tell of danger. He may now feel that it is safe for him to stay at home.'

'I'll go to Caesar's house and bring him to the Senate,' said Decius, one of Cassius's friends. 'I'll tell him what a great man he is. That will please him. He'll come.'

Portia

Soon after Cassius and his friends had gone, Portia came into the garden to Brutus. Portia was Brutus's wife. She was wise and beautiful.

'You have got up in the middle of the night,' she said. 'And last night when we were eating our meal, you suddenly stood up and began to walk about. I asked you what the matter was and you looked angrily at me and didn't answer. You don't eat, or talk, or sleep. Tell me what is troubling you.'

'I don't feel well. That's all,' said Brutus.

'Why are you walking in your garden at this late hour if you are sick? No! You are sick in your mind, not in your body. Tell me!' She was on her knees now. 'Who were those men who came to you tonight? They hid their faces.'

'Don't kneel to me, gentle Portia!'

'I shouldn't kneel if you were gentle, Brutus. I'm not just a woman to be with you at meals and talk to you sometimes. I'm your wife and have a right to know your secrets.'

There was a sound at the door. 'Portia, go in,' said Brutus. 'I'll tell you later.'

Calpurnia

Another wife was also troubled and afraid that night. This was Caesar's wife.

Caesar said, 'There is no peace in heaven or earth tonight. Three times my wife, Calpurnia, cried out in her sleep: "Help! Help! They are killing Caesar."'

Calpurnia came to him. 'Don't leave your home today,' she said. 'You have enemies. Many things tell of danger to you.'

'I shall go,' said Caesar. 'When my enemies see my face, they will be afraid. Men who fear death die many times; but brave men die only once. It seems strange to me that men should be afraid to die; death is a necessary end and it will come when it will come.'

A servant entered. 'The wise men,' he said, 'say that you should not leave the house today. They have killed an animal and cut open its body. They looked for anything which seemed strange and found that the animal had no heart. Therefore they say that you must not go.'

'I should be like an animal without a heart if I stayed at home,' said Caesar.

'Oh my lord,' cried Calpurnia. 'You are brave—too brave; but you are not wise. Don't go out today. Say that it is my fear, not yours which keeps you in the house. We'll send Mark Antony and he can say that you are not well today.'

'Well,' said Caesar, 'to please you I will stay at home. Mark Antony shall say that I am not well.'

Decius speaks

Caesar had just decided this when Decius, Cassius's friend, arrived. Decius had come to take Caesar to meet

all the other people who ruled Rome. He had promised Cassius and Brutus to make certain that Caesar left his house.

'Tell the people of Rome that I will not come out today,' Caesar said. 'My wife has asked me to stay at home: she had bad dreams about me, and is afraid for my life!'

'The people are going to give you a crown today,' said Decius. 'If you can't come, they may change their minds. And everyone will laugh at you. They'll say that you can't come until your wife has better dreams. If Caesar doesn't come, they'll say "Caesar is afraid."'

Caesar said, 'How foolish your fears seem now, Calpurnia! I should not have listened to them . . . I will go.'

Then Caesar left the house to go to his death.

'Strike!'

On the way to the Senate two people were waiting to talk to Caesar. One of them was an old man who had already told Caesar to be careful on that day. The other man was a teacher who had written a letter to Caesar. Now he wanted to give Caesar the letter as Caesar walked past him. The letter told Caesar that Brutus and Cassius had planned to kill him.

'Read this, Caesar. It is important to you.'

'If it is important only to me, it can wait,' said Caesar.

'No! Read it now!'

'I can't stop to read it in the street. Bring it to me later.'

Caesar entered the Senate House.

'Look, Brutus,' said Casca. 'Our friend Trebonius is leading Mark Antony away. Where's Metellus? He must go and speak to Caesar about his brother whom Caesar sent away from Rome.'

'Metellus is there,' said Brutus. 'Come, let's press round them. Casca, you must strike first.'

Metellus fell on his knees before Caesar. 'Most high, most powerful Caesar, I pray you. . .'

'Get up!' said Caesar. 'If you kneel before me like that, I shall treat you as a dog.'

'I pray you, Caesar, allow my brother to return to Rome. . . Will no one speak for me?'

'I kiss your hand, Caesar,' said Brutus, 'and pray that he may be allowed to return.'

'Prayers may move other men,' answered Caesar. 'They change; but I do not change. I am fixed, like a star. There is no other star like me in the sky. There are many men in the world, but there is only one who holds his place unshaken. I am he. I ordered him to go: my order stands.'

They pressed round him, crying, 'O Caesar! Great Caesar!' Then Casca cried out, 'Strike!' and they struck Caesar with their swords. Brutus struck last.

'And you, Brutus!' cried Caesar as he fell.

Then Brutus cried out, 'People and Senators, don't be afraid. We don't mean to hurt anyone. Come, let's put our hands in Caesar's blood and, holding our red swords above our heads, cry "Peace and Freedom!" We shall be called the men who set Rome free.'

Mark Antony

Before they went out, one of Mark Antony's servants appeared. Antony had been with Caesar when he entered the building. As soon as Caesar was killed, Antony had gone home. Now his servant came to see Brutus. He asked if Antony might come safely to Brutus and learn the reason for Caesar's death.

Brutus said, 'Your master is a wise and brave Roman.

Ask him to come to this place. We shall tell him, and he will return safe.'

'I'll bring him,' said the servant.

'I know we shall have Mark Antony as a friend,' said Brutus.

But Casca said, 'I hope we may, but I am afraid of him.'

When Antony arrived he stopped by Caesar's body and sadly said, 'O powerful Caesar, have all the great things that you have done ended in this?' Then he turned to Brutus and his friends. 'I don't know, gentlemen, what your plans are. Who else must be killed? If it is me, kill me now—at the same time as the great Caesar and with the swords which are still red with his blood.'

'O Antony,' cried Brutus. 'Our swords are not meant for you. Our hands are bloody, but our hearts are sad: we have killed Caesar only for the good of Rome. We love you like a brother. Wait till we have spoken to the people: then you shall know why I, who loved Caesar when I struck him, have done this.'

'My friends, I do not doubt that you are wise. I am with you all and love you all. I hope that you will give me reasons, why and in what way Caesar was dangerous. Only I ask this. Let me take his body to the public square, where, as his friend, I may speak good of him.'

Casca did not like this, but Brutus said, 'I shall speak first and tell the reason for Caesar's death, and say that we have allowed Antony to speak in Caesar's honour.'

'I don't know what will happen. I don't like it,' said Casca. But Brutus and his friends left Antony alone with the body of Caesar.

Octavius

Antony looked sadly at the dead body of his friend; then he began to talk to Caesar as if he were alive.

'Oh forgive me, Caesar, for being so gentle to the men who killed you. You were the greatest man who ever lived. I shall deal with those who killed you. There will be a long war, many will be killed and many things will be destroyed. I make this solemn promise to you: I shall not rest until Brutus and Cassius are dead.'

Just then a servant arrived from Octavius Caesar. Octavius was the son of Julius Caesar's brother. Julius Caesar had sent for Octavius to come to Rome, and Octavius was now only a few miles outside the city. He did not know about his uncle's death that morning.

Antony said to the servant, 'Go back and tell him what has happened. Rome isn't safe for him. No! Wait till I have spoken to the people, then you may tell Octavius how things are.'

Brutus speaks to the people

The next day in the public square Brutus told the common people of Rome the reasons for Caesar's death. He spoke simply and clearly. A large crowd had gathered to listen to him. He said:

'I loved Caesar as much as any of his friends. I killed Caesar because I loved Rome more. He wanted power. Did you want Caesar to live and make you all servants to him? Or do you want Caesar dead and to be free men? I shall kill myself with the same sword when it is for the good of Rome.'

When Brutus had almost finished speaking to the crowd, Mark Antony and his servants carried Caesar's body into the public square.

The people cried, 'Long live Brutus. Let him be Caesar! Let him be ruler in Caesar's place! Let us carry him to his home!'

Brutus said, 'Good people, let me leave alone. Stay

here with Antony and listen to him. We have allowed him to speak in Caesar's honour.'

'Let him speak,' said one man, 'but he mustn't speak against Brutus.'

'It's a good thing that Caesar is dead,' said another.

'Silence!' said the first man. 'Let's hear what Antony has to say.'

'Let's hear him,' shouted all the people.

'Friends, Romans, countrymen'

Mark Antony began to speak.

'Friends, Romans, countrymen—men of my own country. The bad things that men do live after them; the good is often forgotten after their death. Caesar was my friend, true and just to me. When the poor cried, he wept. Brutus said that Caesar wanted more and more power. I offered Caesar the crown three times, but he wouldn't take it. You all loved Caesar once: you had good reason to love him. For what cause do you not weep for him now?'

The men in the crowd began to talk.

'They have done wrong to Caesar,' one man said.

'There isn't a nobler man in Rome than Antony. See how his eyes are red with weeping,' another cried.

'Yesterday,' said Antony, 'Caesar was the most powerful man in the world; now he lies there. Look at him. I could move your hearts to anger against Brutus and Cassius, but that would be wrong, because, as you know, they are men whom we should honour. I would rather do wrong to the dead and to myself than to them.'

Antony went on: 'I have here a paper, written by Caesar. It is his will*. It tells what is to be done with his money and land after his death. I won't read it.—If I

read it to you, you would want to kiss Caesar's wounds.'

'Read it! Read it!' cried the people.

'No. It isn't right that you should know how much Caesar loved you. It would make you angry.'

The will

'Read it! Read the will!' cried the people.

'I shouldn't read it. I am afraid that I may do wrong to the honourable men who killed Caesar.'

'They aren't honourable men!' cried the people. 'Read the will!'

'Stand in a ring round his body. Be ready to weep now. This is his coat; he wore it first in the battle when he beat the Nervii. This is the place where Cassius's sword went through. Here is the hole that Casca made. Here was Brutus's sword; see how the blood followed it. Brutus was Caesar's truest friend. Caesar loved him. When he saw Brutus strike, great Caesar fell. O what a fall was there! Then I and you and all of us fell down, while these men of blood stood over us. Ah! Now you weep.'

'O noble Caesar,' cried the people. 'Oh most bloody sight! Kill them! Burn their houses!'

'Why?' said Antony, 'why are you going to do these things? What has Caesar done to make you love him? You have forgotten the will—here it is. He gives each Roman seventy-five pieces of money. He leaves you all his gardens and his fields to walk and play in.'

'We shall take his body to the Burning Place, and with the fire set fire to those men's houses,' the crowd cried out.

Then they carried away Caesar's body.

'Now I have started something,' said Antony. 'Let's see what happens.'

A servant came to him. 'Octavius has come to Rome. Brutus and Cassius have gone out of the gates.'

Caesar's ghost

Brutus and Cassius saw too late how dangerous Antony was. They gathered an army and prepared to fight Antony and Octavius's men. But Brutus and Cassius soon began to quarrel. Cassius was so unhappy about the quarrel that he offered his sword to Brutus.

'Kill me as you killed Caesar,' he cried. 'I know that you loved Caesar far more than you have ever loved me.'

'Put away your sword,' said Brutus. 'Oh Cassius, Portia, my wife, is dead. She killed herself because I was away from her and because Octavius and Antony are becoming so strong.'

Then Brutus and Cassius heard that Octavius and Antony were travelling towards Philippi, a place quite near their own army.

'Let us march to Philippi at once,' said Brutus.

'No,' said Cassius, 'I don't think that will be wise. It is better for the enemy to look for us. Then their soldiers will be tired when we fight against them.'

'The people between here and Philippi are our enemies,' answered Brutus. 'Antony's army will be able to gather more men as they come. Our own army is as strong as it will ever be. We must not miss this chance or it will be lost for ever.'

Cassius was silent. He agreed to go with Brutus to Philippi to meet the enemy.

Brutus remained awake after Cassius had left his tent. He began to read. Then he sent his servant away. 'Good boy, good night,' he said. 'Let me see, is this where I stopped reading? The lamp is burning low. Ah! What's that?'

'To tell you that you will see me at Philippi'

The ghost of Caesar was standing before him.
'Why have you come?' cried Brutus.
'To tell you that you will see me at Philippi.'

Philippi

Antony, Octavius, and their army were at Philippi.

'Now, Antony,' said Octavius, 'it is as we hoped. You feared that the enemy would stay up in the hills, but they have come down.'

'I understand them,' answered Antony. 'They think that this will show us that they are not afraid.'

Cassius was preparing for the battle, but he was not happy. He had seen great birds following his army, as if they were looking for dead men to feed on.

'If we lose this battle,' said Cassius, 'you will be led a prisoner through the streets of Rome.'

'No, Cassius,' said Brutus, 'don't think that! This day must end the work that we began when we killed Caesar. I don't know whether we shall meet again. So let's say goodbye. If we do meet again, we shall laugh at this. If we don't, it's good to say goodbye now.'

The noblest Roman

Soon the battle began. At one time it seemed that Antony's army was winning and at another time it seemed that Brutus was winning. At last, Cassius's men began to fall back. Antony's soldiers set fire to the tents of Cassius's army. Cassius saw that his army was losing the battle: he did not want to be caught by Antony's men, so he asked one of his soldiers to kill him.

Brutus found Cassius dead at the foot of a hill. He looked at Cassius's own sword which was stuck through

the heart of his brave friend. He remembered Caesar's ghost and knew that he would lose the battle.

The fight continued, and one after another of Brutus's friends were killed. Brutus, with a few friends, heard the enemy coming nearer and nearer. But, like Cassius, Brutus was very brave and would not run away. He ordered a soldier to hold out his sword. Then Brutus threw himself upon it.

'Caesar, now be happy,' he cried as he died. 'I did not kill you half so willingly as I have killed myself.'

Mark Antony looked down at the body of Brutus. 'This was the noblest Roman of them all,' he said. 'All those others wanted Caesar's power. Brutus thought of nothing but the good of all the people. He was truly a great man.'

Questions

There are two questions for each section

The Merchant of Venice

1 Where were Antonio's ships?
2 What was Antonio's best friend called?

1 Why did the merchants of Venice not like Shylock?
2 What did Antonio promise to give Shylock if he could not pay?

1 Who was Nerissa?
2 What were the three boxes made of?

1 Which country did the second prince come from?
2 Which box did he open?

1 What did the paper inside the box tell Bassanio to do?
2 What did Portia give Bassanio?

1 What did Portia tell Bassanio to do?
2 What did Portia decide to pretend to be?

1 Who had run away to get married?
2 Who did Antonio want to see before he died?

1 What did the Duke of Venice ask Shylock?
2 How much did Bassanio offer Shylock?

1 How was Nerissa dressed?—Like...
2 Why could the famous judge not come to Venice?

1 What did Bassanio now offer to pay?
2 Which part of Antonio's body did Shylock want to cut the flesh from?

1 What did Portia tell Shylock to take?
2 What would happen if Shylock let one drop of blood fall?

1 What did Antonio make Shylock promise to do on his death?
2 What did Shylock say?

1 What did Portia want Bassanio to give to her?
2 What did Bassanio say he would give her?

1 Who began to quarrel?
2 What did they quarrel about?

1 Who did Bassanio say he had given the ring to?
2 What did the letter to Antonio say?

A Midsummer Night's Dream

1 What did the law say?
2 What was the name of the old man's daughter?

1 Where did Lysander tell Hermia to meet him?
2 Why did Helena tell Demetrius about the plan?—Because...

1 What kind of people were in the wood the next evening?
2 Why was Oberon angry with Titania?

1 What happens when the magic liquid is poured on the eyes of a person who is sleeping?
2 Whose eyes did Oberon want to pour the liquid on?

1 Who passed through the wood near Oberon?
2 On whose eyes did Oberon mean Puck to pour the liquid—Demetrius's or Lysander's?

1 What was Titania doing when Oberon saw her?
2 What did Oberon do when Titania fell asleep?

1 Who was Puck looking for?
2 What were the workmen doing?

1 What did Bottom tell Peas-blossom to do?
2 What did Bottom want to eat?

1 On whose eyes did Puck put the liquid—Lysander's or Demetrius's?
2 Who did Lysander see when he opened his eyes?

1 Why was Hermia angry?
2 What did Oberon tell Puck to do?—'Go and bring...'

1 What woke Demetrius?
2 What did Helena think that all three people had done?

1 What must Puck do so that Lysander and Demetrius cannot see each other?
2 What will the magic liquid do to Lysander?

1 What did Oberon take away while Titania was asleep?
2 What did Puck do to Bottom?

1 Who entered the forest early that morning?
2 Where did they all go to be married?

Hamlet

1 Why was Hamlet sad?
2 What made him even sadder?

1 Where had the ghost appeared?

2 How was the ghost dressed?

1 What could Hamlet and the soldiers hear inside the castle?
2 Where did Horatio think the ghost might lead Hamlet?

1 What killed Hamlet's father?
2 What must Hamlet do to Claudius?

1 What did Hamlet pretend to be?
2 Who was Polonius?

1 What did Polonius read to the king and queen?
2 What did Claudius decide to do?

1 What did Hamlet ask the two friends?
2 Who was Hamlet pleased to see?

1 What did Hamlet ask Horatio to do?
2 What did the queen in the play promise?

1 What did the servant ask Hamlet to do?
2 What was Claudius doing?

1 Who heard the queen crying for help?
2 What did Hamlet do?

1 What did the ghost tell Hamlet to do?
2 What did the queen ask Hamlet?—'What are you...'

1 What might the people of Denmark try to do?
2 What did Claudius write in the letter?

1 What did Hamlet look for?
2 What did he change in the letter?

1 What were the old men doing?
2 Who had died?

1 What did Laertes plan to put on the end of his sword?
2 What did Horatio say to Hamlet?—'No one can...'

1 What did Claudius offer Hamlet?
2 Who drank the cup of poison?

1 Who told Hamlet that he would soon die?
2 What did Hamlet do then?

The Tempest

1 What did Prospero like to do?
2 What did he let Antonio do?

1 How did Prospero treat Caliban at first?
2 How was Prospero able to set Ariel free?

1 What did Prospero use his magic to cause?
2 Who was Ferdinand?

1 Where did Ariel leave Ferdinand?
2 What did Miranda think Ferdinand was?

1 Why was Prospero delighted?
2 Why did he speak unkindly to Ferdinand?

1 What work did Ferdinand do?
2 What promise did Miranda break?

1 Which two men stayed awake?
2 What did they plan to do?

1 What did the strange shapes bring?
2 What happened when the men were reaching for the food?

1 What did Ariel tell Prospero?
2 What clothes did Prospero tell Ariel to bring?

1 What did Ferdinand say about Prospero?—'He has been . . .'
2 What did the king reply?—'Then I shall be . . .'

Julius Caesar

1 What did the people of Rome offer Julius Caesar?
2 Who was Caesar's closest friend?

1 What stopped many men from sleeping?
2 What did the letter tell Brutus to do?

1 Who had come to see Brutus?
2 Who else did Cassius want them to kill?

1 Who was Portia?
2 Portia had a right to know something. What?

1 Who was Calpurnia?
2 What did she cry out in her sleep?

1 What would everyone say if Caesar stayed at home?
2 What did Caesar decide to do in the end?

1 Who cried out, 'Strike!'?
2 Who struck last?

1 What did Antony do when Caesar was killed?
2 Brutus said, 'We shall have Mark Antony as a friend.' What did Casca say?

1 Who was Octavius Caesar?
2 Where was he?

1 What did the people want to do to Brutus?
2 What did Mark Antony and his servants carry into the public square?

1 What do people remember after a man's death?
2 What do they forget?

1 What did Caesar give to every person in Rome?
2 Who was to have all his beautiful gardens?

1 What did Brutus and Cassius prepare to do?
2 Why was Brutus sad?

1 What had Antony feared?
2 Why does Brutus say goodbye to Cassius?

1 Where did Brutus find Cassius?
2 What did Mark Antony say about Brutus?

List of extra words

borrow *be allowed by the owner to take and use something of his, returning it later*
choose *look at two or more things and decide which to have*
ducat *a gold coin used in Venice*
flesh *meat-like part of the body*
ghost *a person who is dead but who appears at certain times*
lend *allow someone to borrow*
mad *ill in the mind*
mercy *readiness to forgive, or not to be unkind*

pirate
poison *a liquid that kills*
Senate *the meeting of the men who ruled Rome*
will *a paper written to say who must have a person's money and other things after his death*

The people in the stories

The usual way of saying the name is given in the letters used in Longman's *Dictionary of Contemporary English.*

The Tempest

Antonio /æn'təʊnɪəʊ/
Ariel /'eərɪəl/
Caliban /'kælɪbæn/
Ferdinand /'fɜ:dɪnənd/
Gonzalo /gɒn'zeɪləʊ/
Miranda /mɪ'rændə/
Prospero /'prɒspərəʊ/
Sebastian /sə'bæstɪən/

Hamlet

Claudius /'klɔ:dɪəs/
Gertrude /'gɜ:tru:d/
Hamlet /'hæmlət/
Horatio /hɒ'reɪʃɪəʊ/
Laertes /leɪ'ɜ:ti:z/
Ophelia /əʊ'fi:lɪə/
Polonius /pə'ləʊnɪəs/

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Demetrius /dɪ'mi:trɪəs/
Helena /'helɪnə/
Hermia /'hɜ:mɪə/
Lysander /laɪ'sændə/
Oberon /'əʊbərɒn/
Puck /pʌk/
Titania /tɪ'tɑ:nɪə/

The Merchant of Venice

Antonio /æn'təʊnɪəʊ/
Balthazar /bælθə'zɑ:/
Bassanio /bə'sɑ:nɪəʊ/
Gratiano /'grɑ:ʃɪ'ɑ:nəʊ/
Nerissa /nɪ'rɪsə/
Portia /'pɔ:ʃɪə/
Shylock /'ʃaɪlɒk/

Julius Caesar

Brutus /'bru:təs/
Calpurnia /kæl'pɜ:nɪə/
Casca /'kæskə/
Decius /'di:sɪəs/
Julius Caesar /'dʒu:liəs 'si:zə/
Mark Antony /'mɑ:k 'æntənɪ/
Metellus /mɪ'teləs/
Octavius Caesar /ɒk'teɪvɪəs 'si:zə/
Portia /'pɔ:ʃɪə/
Trebonius /trə'bəʊnɪəs/

Set in 270 Bembo 12/13pt
Printed in Hong Kong by
Sheck Wah Tong Printing Press Limited

Some more titles in this series

Robinson Crusoe Daniel Defoe
Monte Cristo Alexandre Dumas
Moonfleet J Meade Falkner
Emil and the Detectives Erich Kästner
The Last Days of Pompeii Lord Lytton
Children of the New Forest Captain Marryatt RN
The Black Pearl Scott O'Dell
As You Like It and Much Ado About Nothing
William Shakespeare
The Blue Lagoon H De vere Stacpoole
Dracula Bram Stoker
Frankenstein Mary Shelley
King of the Undersea City George G Toudouze
The Young King and other stories Oscar Wilde
The Midwich Cuckoos John Wyndham
The Swiss Family Robinson J R Wyss
Stories from Shakespeare
Tales of Ancient Rome
Classic Ballet Stories

NMSR
Stage 3

ISBN 0 582 53529 8

STORIES FROM SHAKESPEARE